

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (GA-02) today praised President Obama and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for designating 17 Georgia counties as a federal disaster area. Under the major disaster declaration, individuals and business owners in affected areas are eligible for temporary housing and home repair grants, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses and other recovery programs.

“I want to thank President Obama and FEMA for this very important designation that will provide much-needed relief to areas that have been hardest hit by the recent storms, flooding, tornadoes and high winds,” Bishop said. “As our area continues to recover, I encourage affected communities to take full advantage of this federal assistance.”

The President's action makes Individual Assistance funding (for individuals and households) available to affected individuals in Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Coffee, Colquitt, Decatur, Dougherty, Echols, Lanier, Lowndes, Miller, Mitchell, Pierce, Tift, Ware, Wheeler and Worth Counties.

Public Assistance funding (for state and local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations for emergency work and the repair or replacement of disaster-damaged facilities) is available in Appling, Atkinson, Bacon, Baker, Ben Hill, Berrien, Clinch, Coffee, Colquitt, Early, Echols, Grady, Lowndes, Mitchell, Montgomery, Pierce, Toombs and Ware Counties.

According to FEMA, residents and business owners who sustained losses in the designated counties can begin applying for assistance immediately by registering online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling 1-800-621-FEMA(3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (local time) seven days a week until further notice.

For more information about the Federal Disaster declaration, please visit FEMA's Georgia assistance web page at <http://www.fema.gov/news/event.fema?id=11388>.

For information about including additional Georgia counties in the disaster area declaration, please contact the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) at (404) 635-7000; <http://www.gema.ga.gov>.